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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/68/L.61

Twentieth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015

Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/68/18) in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/68/L.61. During its consideration of the statement, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 12 December 2013.

2. Draft resolution A/C.2/68/L.61 was adopted by the Second Committee at its 40th meeting, on 6 December 2013, following which the Advisory Committee received an advanced version of the Secretary-General's statement on the programme budget implications thereof on 9 December 2013. Subsequent to its meeting with representatives of the Secretary-General on 10 December 2013 and receipt of written responses on 11 December 2013, the Committee considered the programme budget implications on 12 December 2013.

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3. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee received information relating to a comparison of the budget of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and proposed budget of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) preparatory processes, including the composition of the secretariat for Habitat II and the proposed secretariat for Habitat III. **The Advisory Committee reiterates its view that the presentation of proposals for additional requirements for implementation of new mandates should include a clear analysis of actual expenditure in respect of similar activities (see A/67/647, para. 7) and the Committee recommends that the Secretary-General be requested to provide such detailed supplementary information in respect of all future revised estimates and statements of programme budget implications.**

Mandate

4. According to the Secretary-General's statement, under the terms of operative paragraphs 4 and 9 of draft resolution A/C.2/68/L.61, the General Assembly would (a) affirm resolution 24/14 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) on the inputs and support required for the preparatory process of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), to be met by regular budget and voluntary contributions, encourage the Secretary-General to seek voluntary support for this purpose and call upon Member States to provide such support; (b) request the Secretary-General of the Conference to mobilize the expertise of the United Nations system as a whole, including the regional commissions, and of other relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, for the Habitat III preparatory process (see A/C.5/68/18, para. 2).

5. The Secretary-General indicates that the principal tasks to be carried out in the biennium 2014-2015 are to: (a) establish the secretariat of Habitat III; (b) start the preparatory process at the country and regional levels through the national habitat committees and disseminate guidelines for the preparation of national reports; and (c) hold two meetings of the Preparatory Committee in New York and Nairobi in 2014 and 2015, respectively (see A/C.5/68/18, para. 6).

Proposed resource requirements

6. Total requested resource requirements amount to $2,073,700 under section 15, Human settlements, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, representing a charge against the contingency fund, and an additional amount of $133,800 under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. Provision has also been made in the amount of $1,063,000 under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 (see A/C.5/68/18, paras. 17 to 19).

7. The resources would provide for general temporary assistance as detailed below ($821,100); consultants ($624,000); the convening of four expert group meetings to provide collective advice to the first and second meetings of the Preparatory Committee ($315,000); travel ($117,500); rental and maintenance of the

premises in Nairobi ($133,600); office automation equipment ($35,000); supplies ($15,000); and miscellaneous expenses ($12,500) (see A/C.5/68/18, para. 18).

General temporary assistance

8. Resources requested for the Habitat III secretariat comprise:

(a) general temporary assistance resources for one Deputy Secretary-General of the conference (D-2) to assist the Secretary-General of the Conference in the substantive high-level consultations held with Member States and in raising political support for the preparation, participation and outcome of Habitat III; two Administrative Assistants (1 General Service (Other level) and (1 Local level)); and one Programme Assistant (Local level) for administrative support; and (b) two Senior Programme Officers (P-5) and three Programme Officers (P-3), who are expected to be funded through the trust fund established in accordance with paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 67/216 to support the preparations for the Conference (see A/C.5/68/18, paras. 7 to 9).

9. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 67/216 and paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.2/68/L.61 formed the rationale for proportioning the estimated funding requirements for the preparatory process of Habitat III between the two sources of funds: the regular budget and the trust fund. The Committee was also informed that the main rationale for distinguishing the sources of funds for the above positions was to determine the absolute minimum needs required for the secretariat of Habitat III in order to commence mobilization of voluntary contributions to the trust fund and to sufficiently meet the requirements of the preparatory process.

10. In paragraph 13 (a) of its resolution 67/216 the General Assembly urged international and bilateral donors as well as the private sector, financial institutions, foundations and other donors in a position to do so to support the preparations for the Conference through voluntary contributions to the trust fund and to support the participation of representatives of developing countries in the Preparatory Committee meetings and in the Conference itself. Under the terms of operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.2/68/L.61, the Assembly would affirm the Governing Council of UN-Habitat resolution 24/14 on the inputs and support required for the Habitat III preparatory process to be met through the regular budget and voluntary contributions. **The Advisory Committee notes that the preparatory process for Habitat III is to be met through both the regular budget and voluntary contributions. The Committee considers the rationale for apportioning estimated funding requirements between the regular budget and the trust fund to be unclear. For instance, the Committee notes that the two Senior Programme Officers (P-5) and three Programme Officers (P-3), proposed to be funded through the trust fund, would perform core functions within the Habitat III secretariat of supporting the preparations for the Conference. In light of these considerations, the Committee questions the basis for funding these posts through the trust fund, rather than through the regular budget. Nonetheless, the Committee recommends approval of the requested resources at this time and will revisit this issue in the context of the performance report of the Secretary-General on the programme budget for the**

biennium 2014-2015 and in the context of any additional proposed requirements related to the Conference.

Consultants

11. The statement of programme budget implications indicates that the proposed consultants would provide specialized expertise that is not available in the Secretariat and for which building in-house capacity is not considered to be cost-effective, including: (a) one consultant for 8 work-months to collect data and create indicators required for the national, regional and global assessments; (b) one consultant for 12 work-months to manage the assessment project and design relevant assessment tools, methodologies and related outputs; (c) six consultants for 4 work-months each to prepare six regional assessment reports; and (d) one consultant for 12 work-months to prepare a global assessment report (see A/C.5/68/18, para. 12).

12. The Committee notes that in resolution 24/14 of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, the Secretary-General of the Conference was requested to use expertise of UN-Habitat and of the United Nations system as a whole (paras. 2, 5, 6 and 8). Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that at the second meeting of the Habitat III Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee, it was agreed that other United Nations system organizations would specify their inputs to the Habitat III preparatory process by the end of 2013. **In light of the ongoing process of determining the input by other United Nations system organizations to the Habitat III preparatory process, the Advisory Committee is not convinced that all the requested consultancy services would be required at this time, as some of the capacity would likely exist within other United Nations system organizations. However, the Committee recommends approval of the requested resources under consultants at this time, and requests that an update on the inputs of other United Nations system organizations be provided in the context of the performance report of the Secretary-General on the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.**

Conclusion

13. **The Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.2/68/L.61 (a) additional non-recurrent resources in the amount of $2,073,700 would be required under section 15, Human settlements, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, representing a charge against the contingency fund, and the appropriation of the additional amount of $2,073,700 for the biennium 2014-2015; and (b) an additional amount of $133,800 would be required under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.**